

Unitarian Church of Hinsdale
August 2023 Board Report
Rev Dr Beth Johnson

Dear Board.

As we enter the fifth month of our shared ministry, I want to commend you on your commitment and dedication. The StartUp weekend was a success with 40+ people attending on Friday evening and all of you showing up for day-long retreat to vision for the congregation. Thanks for all you do!

A note about building staffing:

It has come to my attention that a member has expressed concern about the RE/Office building being unattended or largely unstaffed. It might help you to know my schedule for August while Pam is on vacation, as I indicated in my blog to the congregation 7/28/23. Also noted in my report below.

This month, during the week I am in the office for several hours Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursday. I check the phone, email, and sort the mail, and work in my office, sometimes having meetings. I haven't set hours because on the weeks I have evening meetings, I will come in later and the hours will necessarily vary week to week. In addition, I am in attendance every Sunday whether or not I am in the pulpit attending committee meetings and meeting with Saenvih. I have indicated that I am available by phone, text, or email at any time.

Mondays are a work at home day. For August, Friday and Saturday are ostensibly days off on the weeks that I am not in the pulpit. For weeks in the pulpit I work both days.

To put things in perspective, when Pam is here, she is in the office several hours four days per week mornings - Mon, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, with Fridays off, unless she takes Thursdays off and comes in on Friday.

Worship

- Sunday services are going well. It seems people like to be outside when the weather is nice. I noticed moving inside last Sunday (8.6) there were not as many attendees. It could have been because it was a rainy day and staying home was cozy, or there may have been confusion about where we are meeting. I plan to email people with those updates (see below)
 - I will be in the pulpit these dates:
 - August 6, 20 - note that is changed from my initial plan to cover when there was no one available for August 6th. It worked out well.

- Service planning for the fall is well under way. We will be utilizing the Soul Matters themes.
- Preliminary meeting with our choir director, Julia Beckman, to brainstorm fall music.
- The worship associates have been creative this summer.

Administration

- Reminder - Pam Fodor is on vacation July 29-August 27. I decided against any time off this summer other than attending the Parliament of the World's Religions.
 - Office coverage: I am in the office Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Sundays of course.
 - Upon Pam's recommendation I have asked a member, Ron Solberg, to check email and phone the week of August 14 while I am at the Parliament.
- Pam and I met prior to her vacation and have developed some exciting 2023-2024 year's activities and initiatives.
- Regular meetings with our bookkeeper, Saenvih.
- Unresolved or in process:
 - Phone system - At this time there is no way to check for messages remotely. Although there are very few calls, it is important to pick up any that might come in.
 - Computer - I am unable to check the office email remotely. It requires an additional username and password that is not available.
 - Database: I am recommending update to Breeze from PowerChurch
- Administrator position
 - Job description being refined, more conversation with personnel committee to be had to refine further.

Pastoral Care

- I'm pleased that I am being sought out for pastoral care. It is an important part of my ministry and I'm glad folks are checking in. I, of course, check in on people when I hear of concerns.

• Circles

○ Social Justice

- Green Sanctuary - still planning our work on Active Hope
 - I stay connected with Faith In Place activities and attend when I am free.

- Racial Equity Team - I'll be co-facilitating their book study "See No Stranger"
- Welcoming Congregation - taking August off but have a summer read
- I'll miss the Animal Ministry retreat this month...:-)
- **Stewardship**
 - Met with Steve Trout to connect around this circle and our work together
 - Attended the first Fundraising meeting Sunday 7.30.23, will attend regularly
 - Attended the Finance meeting Sunday 8.6.23 - after service meetings are sometimes hard to get to on time
- **Home & Garden**
 - I've met with Thom and Charlie a couple of times to learn their plans and aspirations for the buildings and grounds.
 - I have ordered new bookshelves for the minister's office

Denominational affairs

- Bob D-W and I attended GA.
 - Article II draft passed for a year of study. I will work with the congregation to familiarize them with the draft and encourage wide participation in the discussions.
- We can work to develop a plan for more denominational involvement.

UUMA

- I will be mentoring a seminarian this year

Up for examination: I understand that UCH had a communications circle but that was disbanded when a staff person was hired. In conversation and observation, this is an area that can use attention. That is true in all congregations, all the time. We are not unique. I'll be spending time in conversation with folx about where and how they get information, how else would they like to. I'll be exploring our social media presence and communication tools. I'll have some recommendations coming up.

2023-2024 Leave Time

- July 1-11 - I postponed August time off.